Toms Coffee

THE

Siege of AQUILEIA.

A

TRAGEDY.

[By John Home.]

As it is acted at the

Court

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

—— Me non oracula certum,
Sed mors certa facit, pavido, fortique cadendum eſt;
Hoc ſatis eſt dixiſſe Jovem.

LUCAN.

LONDON:
Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand.
M.DCC.LX.

THE

Siege of AQUILEIA,

A

TRAGEDY.

BRITISH MUSEUM

46
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4044

As it is acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

—— Me non cruenta certum
Sed mors certa facit, perfida, fortuna cælandum ef:
Hoc fatis eft (fi fic fe) Jovem.

Lucan.

LONDON:
Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand.
M.DCC.LX.

PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

WHEN Philip's ſon led forth his warlike band,
To die, or conquer, in a diſtant land;
To fan the fire, a martial muſe he choſe;
From Homer's ſong a new Achilles roſe!
When generous Athens her prime trophies won,
Vanquiſh'd Darius, and Darius' ſon,
The ſtage breath'd war——the ſoldiers boſom burn'd,
And fierier to the field each chief return'd:
Now, when the world reſounds with loud alarms,
When victory ſits plan'd on Britain's arms,
Be war our theme; the hero's glorious toil,
And virtue ſpringing from the iron ſoil!
Our ſcenes preſent a ſiege in ſtory known;
Where magnanimity, and valour ſhone:
If nature guides us, if the hand of truth
Draws the juſt portrait of a Roman youth,
Who, with the beſt and nobleſt paſſions fir'd,
In the ſame moment, conquer'd and expir'd;
Perhaps your hearts may own the pictur'd woe,
And from a ſonder ſource your ſorrows flow:
Whilſt warm remembrance aids the poet's ſtrain,
And England weeps for Engliſh heroes ſlain.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ÆMILIUS,	Consul of Rome, and Governor of Aquileia.	Mr. GARRICK.
PAULUS, TITUS,	Sons of the Consul.	Mr. AUSTIN. Mr. HOLLAND.
VARUS, DUMNORIX,	Officers in the Army of MAXIMIN.	Mr. DAVIES. Mr. BRANSBY.
GARTHA,	a Numinian Officer in the Troops of ÆMILIUS.	Mr. SCRASE.
Prieſt of JUPITER,		Mr. BURTON.
LUCIUS, a Freedman.		Mr. PACKER.
OFFICER, a Meſſenger.		Mr. ACKMAN.

WOMEN.

CORNELIA,	Wife to the Conſul.	Mrs. CIBBER.

THE Siege of AQUILEIA. A TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Palace Court.

Enter PAULUS *and* TITUS.

THIS is no time to ſtrive for vain renown,
The fate of Rome, remember that, my brother!
Depends on the defence of Aquileia.

TITUS.

PAULUS, I know.

PAULUS.

But thou doſt not conſider
Th' importance of this war. We fight not now,
As oft ſince Freedom fell our fathers fought,
When Latian chiefs contended who ſhould reign,
With half the ſenate liſted on each ſide;
The victor ſtill was Roman, and rever'd

The gods and temples of immortal Rome.
But o'er yon mighty hoſt, that girds our walls,
Fierce MAXIMIN commands: whether of Thrace,
Or wild Dalmatia, ſo obſcure his birth,
Himſelf ſcarce knows; but ſure Barbarian born.
This ſavage ſoldier, nurs'd in blood and war,
Whom military frenzy hath ſet up
To trample on mankind, abhors a Roman;
And marks for death the noble and the brave.
His yoke, at laſt, th' indignant ſenate ſcorns,
The ſlumb'ring Genius of our country wakes,
And rouſes ſlothful Italy to arms.
The furious tyrant from the frontier haſtes,
Like a wild beaſt gall'd by the hunter's ſpear,
And, breathing vengeance, ruſhes upon Rome:
Here firſt oppos'd, tenfold his fury burns;
Here, in the paſs of fate, our father ſtands,
Defies and ſtops the monſter in his rage,
Till Rome's laſt legions come to give him battle.
Now, when a ſoldier's life is of ſuch moment,
When deſtiny hangs on a ſingle day,
To fight for glory, TITUS, were a crime.

TITUS.

No, PAULUS, no! it is not fame alone
That TITUS ſeeks to purchaſe from the foe;
Tho' ſuch a crime the gods and men would pardon.
I know the peril that o'er Rome impends,
And know the hated cauſe of all our ills,
That army, only brave againſt their country,
I mean to ſmite them, and their giant leader,
Whom nature for a gladiator form'd,
To be the ſport, and not the lord, of Rome.
The blow once ſtruck, our foe muſt raiſe the ſiege,
Or waſte his veterans in vain attacks,
And give to GORDIANUS eaſy conqueſt.

PAULUS.

PAULUS.

Were this a frontier city far from Rome,
And yon huge hoſt compos'd of foes remote,
German, or Parthian; I would ſay to thee,
Lead on, my brother! Shield to ſhield we'd go,
And fire yon turret, or together periſh.
But now when conqueſt by delay is gain'd,
When Aquileia guards the walls of Rome,
Dread of the great event has ſo poſſeſs'd me,
That, like the Perſian ſoldier, I could ſtay
My arm uplifted, patient to the call
Of cautious Duty.

TITUS.

And renouncing Fame?
Oh! PAULUS! you have gain'd long ſince the prize
That I contend for. Every martial palm
Thy ſword hath won. When I, like thee, am great
In deeds of arms, like thee I may be wary.
Now to my brother I lay bare my breaſt:
This famous ſiege approaches to its end;
Whatever end the ruling gods ordain,
Yet no diſtinguiſh'd action graces me,
I've done my duty. That I reckon nothing;
The meaneſt ſoldier has not ſhrunk from duty;
Son of ÆMILIUS, and thy brother, PAULUS!
I muſt do more, and by the gods I will!
Here I have found a path that leads to glory;
Do not oppoſe me, elſe—we're friends no more.—
Our father comes. Speak not againſt my purpoſe,
And I ſhall move the conſul's noble mind.

Enter ÆMILIUS.

ÆMILIUS.

Health to my ſons!

PAULUS *and* TITUS.

Heaven guard our father's life!

ÆMILIUS.

And bleſs my children! ha! your looks are keen.
Your's chiefly, TITUS! what hath ſtirr'd your ſpirit?
How points the enemy? This quiet night,
In preparation paſt, portends a ſtorm.

PAULUS.

On that attack which threats the eaſtern gate
The enemy hath labour'd all night long,
Repairing what the river's rage had ruin'd.

ÆMILIUS.

It was a friendly flood. The river god
With all his waters guards his native walls;
On that ſtrong quarter they can ne'er prevail.
The north I fear, where yon ſtupendous tower
Our works commands.

TITUS.

It ſhall not long command,
Let but the conſul grant me my deſire.

ÆMILIUS.

What would my ſon?

TITUS.

Their tower is weakly guarded.
At break of day, a ſoldier from yon camp
Fled to my poſt; hollow and gaunt he was;
His ſhrivell'd limbs ſcarce bore his ſounding arms.
Like him, he ſaid, with toil and famine worn,
Were half the tyrant's hoſt. For MAXIMIN,
Mad with delay, and fiercer from repulſe,
Reviles his ſoldiers, drives them to the trench
With whips and ſharp reproach. This day, o'ercome
By ſtrong neceſſity, he breathes a while,
And ſends his legions forth, to gather in
Whatever this exhauſted region yields.
I ſaw the buſy foragers in troops
March, and diſperſe themſelves on every ſide,
Like playful children on a ſummer day,

Secure and careleſs; for no martial band
Of late hath ſallied from our guarded gates.
This is the time. Permit me, O my father!
Now to attack their ill defended lines,
And fire that mighty tower in which they truſt.

ÆMILIUS.

Well haſt thou ſpoke, my ſon! thy zeal I love,
Nor muſt thy ſkill and judgment paſs unprais'd.
Be thus attentive ſtill, and truſt me, TITUS,
In future ſieges, and in other wars,
Swift execution ſhall thy purpoſe honour.

TITUS.

Ne'er ſhall I ſee another ſiege like this,
Ne'er draw my ſword in ſuch a glorious cauſe.
Alas! my lord! check not my ſpring of thought,
Nor nip the only bud it yet has borne.

ÆMILIUS.

Riper occaſions will thy valour claim.
Danger comes on; Typhæus-like it comes,
Whoſe fabled ſtature every hour encreas'd.

TITUS.

O! judge not of the counſel by the weight
Of him that gives it. Would to heaven, my lord!
That I could now diveſt me of that youth
Which mars my credit. Chearfully I'd ſtep
Far into age, to gain but for a day
The grave authority which years beſtow.

PAULUS.

What brings the brave Numidian GARTHA hither?

Enter GARTHA.

GARTHA.

Hail to the general!

ÆMILIUS.

Hail, valiant GARTHA!
How has the morning paſt where you command?

GARTHA.

It has been buſy. The preſumptuous foe
In looſe diſorder'd ſquadrons rang'd the fields.
I watch'd the time; and ſudden as the blaſt
That riſes in the deſart, out we ruſh'd
And ſwept them from the plain. Safe in our ſpeed
We urg'd the chace far as the riſing ground,
And unmoleſted view'd the camp below.
This worthy of your notice I obſerv'd,
Their wond'rous tower, the work of many a day,
Stands now protected by a feeble guard.

TITUS.

Thanks for thy welcome tidings, noble GARTHA!
The guardian gods of Rome bend from their ſkies,
And point this action out. Hear me, my father!
If ever ſince my birth I gave thee joy,
If e'er thou did'ſt, as parents oft are wont,
Interpret large the promiſe of my childhood,
O hear and grant my chief and dear requeſt!
Let me go forth: be this my firſt exploit,
To wrap in fire the tyrant's boaſted tower;
That Rome, who glories in the Æmilian line,
May join your TITUS to his kindred names!

ÆMILIUS.

In thee the ſpirit of thy fathers ſpeaks,
Or ſome ſuperior power thy boſom fires,
Whom I oppoſe no more. Go, and fulfil
Thy deſtiny. Brave GARTHA too ſhall add
His troops to thine. Prepare what elſe—

TITUS.

'Tis done.
Deſtructive inſtruments and balls of fire
Are ready at the gate.

ÆMILIUS.

Farewel, my ſon!
If you prevail, urge not too far your fortune.

Remember

Remember ſtill my words; that when we meet,
I may have cauſe to praiſe thy conduct then,
As now thy courage, TITUS.

TITUS.

GARTHA, come!

[*Exeunt* TITUS *and* GARTHA.

ÆMILIUS.

PAULUS, lead thou thy legion to the gate,
And favour their retreat. It may be needful;
But mix not in the fight, for mighty cities
Have been by ſuch temerity ſurpriz'd.

PAULUS.

Would that there was no Roman breaſt more prone
To raſh attempts, than mine! I wiſh, my lord,
That I had led, and TITUS had ſuſtain'd me

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER:

Conſul of Rome! this arrow, thus in[illegible]
Fell on the green ſlop'd bank faſt b[illegible]
And as it bears your name, myſelf

" In three days hence, even with the ides of J[illegible]
" The Roman army comes to your relief.
" Be ſparing of your troops; protract the ſiege;
" Thou art the ſhield of Rome and GORDIANUS."

ÆMILIUS.

Soldier, return, and publiſh to the legions
The welcome tidings of a near relief.

OFFICER.

Gladly, my lord. Much have the troops endur'd,
And with unſhaken conſtancy they ſuffer.

[*Exit* OFFICER.

PAULUS.

Had this advice arriv'd ere TITUS went,
I think he hardly had obtain'd permiſſion.

Tho' MAXIMIN ſhould raiſe an hundred towers,
And, like the Giants when they warr'd with Jove,
Pile mountains on each other, high as heaven,
For three ſhort days his fury we may ſcorn.

ÆMILIUS.

Go, and prevent the ſally. Tell thy brother,
What the imperial mandate here contains.
It is the emperor's command recalls him.

PAULUS.

With pleaſure I obey.

[*Exit* PAULUS.

ÆMILIUS *alone.*

I muſt reſerve
my ſoldiers, for a nobler ſervice,
he battle and the Roman arms.
approaches that muſt give to Rome
d, by her own ſuffrage choſen,
maſter o'er mankind.
er I ſhall never own.
rag the ſervile chain,
ive the vaual of a vile Dalmatian,
could not conceal me in the croud
oſtrate Romans; I that ſtood aloft,
d bore thro' Italy the ſenate's ſtandard.
aſt by that ſtandard will I plant my foot,
There with my boys a glorious conqueſt gain,
Or end at once the long Æmilian line.

[CORNELIA *appears.*

Behold the only object that can ſhake
One moment my reſolve! What will become
Of thee, CORNELIA! doom'd perhaps to live,
Like PRIAM's wretched queen, the ſlave of thoſe
By whom her ſons, her huſband, country fell.

Enter CORNELIA *and* PRIEST.

CORNELIA.

Why is my lord alone? Where are my ſons?

ÆMILIUS.

This day, CORNELIA, brings us welcome tidings,
The Emperor approaches with his hoſt.

CORNELIA.

Thanks to the gods! But ſay, where are my children?

ÆMILIA.

This inſtant I expect them to return.

CORNELIA.

From whence, ÆMILIUS?

ÆMILIUS.

From the northern gate.
TITUS had form'd a brave, a great deſign;
But when aſſurance of relief arriv'd,
My PAULUS haſten'd to recal his brother.

CORNELIA.

'Tis as I fear'd. PAULUS will come too late.
The omens of the gods muſt be fulfill'd.

ÆMILIUS.

What evil omens has CORNELIA ſeen?

CORNELIA.

'Tis ſtrange to tell; but as I ſlumb'ring lay,
About that hour when glad Aurora ſprings,
To chace the lagging ſhades, methought I was
In Rome, and full of peace the city ſeem'd.
My mind oblivious too had loſt it's care.
Serene I ſtep'd along the lofty hall,
Imbelliſh'd with the ſtatues of our fathers,
When ſuddenly an univerſal groan
Iſſued at once from every marble breaſt.
Aghaſt I gaz'd around! when ſlowly down
From their high pedeſtals I ſaw deſcend
The murder'd GRACCHI. Hand in hand, the brothers

Stalk'd

Stalk'd towards me. As they approach'd more near,
They were no more the GRACCHI, but my ſons
PAULUS and TITUS. At that dreadful change
I ſhriek'd and wak'd. But never from my mind
The ſpectacle ſhall part. Their rueful eyes!
Their cheeks of ſtone! the look of death and woe!
So ſtrange a viſion ne'er from fancy roſe.
The reſt, my lord! this holy Prieſt can tell.

ÆMILIUS.

Why this is nothing but a common dream;
For often when the waking mind is charg'd
With apprehenſion of uncertain ills,
Imagination, in the hour of reſt,
Preſenteth wild fantaſtic combinations,
That have a ſhade and tincture of the paſt:
But 'tis the weakneſs of the human mind
That joins the vain aſſemblage to futurity.

PRIEST.

Men reaſon thus, my lord! who think their reaſon
Can graſp and meaſure all; preſumptuous thought!
Sounds more than human have been often heard,
And ſhapes celeſtial ſeen, by mortal man;
But yet moſt frequent in the ſilent night
Are warnings given by ſtrange portentuous dreams.
The hiſtory of mighty Rome abounds
In awful inſtances. The old republic
By them has oft been ſway'd, and oft preſerv'd.

ÆMILIUS.

But tell me, Prieſt of JOVE! what do the gods
By their more certain omens now declare?

PRIEST.

Conſul! with the moſt venerable rites
That our religion knows, I have perform'd
A ſacrifice to Capitolian JOVE,
This pious matron preſent: never yet
Since at the altars of the gods I ſtood

Did

Did I behold ſuch omens of calamity.
Yet they were intricate, ambiguous, dark;
And tho' ſome parts I might interpret fair,
Even theſe were mix'd and full of dire perplexity.
No further can I ſee into the cloud,
That veils the will of heaven; but this I ſay,
And by the ſcepter of the god I ſerve
It is the truth: Some dreadful danger hangs
O'er thee thyſelf, this city, or thy race.
(Shout.)

CORNELIA.

Ha! what means that ſhout?

ÆMILIUS.

It is a joyful ſhout.
Behold the cauſe: ſee where that duſky ſmoke
Darkens the air. And now the flame burſts out;
Their turret blazes, and my TITUS conquers.

CORNELIA.

O heaven and earth! O ſon too well belov'd!
Why do theſe cruel omens check my joy?

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

Conſul! your valiant ſon hath fir'd the tower;
But whilſt he urg'd too far the flying foe,
A band, that lay conceal'd beyond the height,
Has gain'd the plain between him and the city.

ÆMILIUS.

O raſhly brave! whom I forewarn'd in vain.——
Retire, CORNELIA, yet he may be reſcu'd.
LUCIUS.

Enter another OFFICER.

LUCIUS.

The northern gate unguarded ſtands:
For when brave PAULUS ſaw his brother's peril,
He with his legion ruſh'd upon the foe,

And

And furious is the fight.

CORNELIA.

Both, both are loſt!

ÆMILIUS.

Unhappy youths! My ſteady PAULUS too!
Where is our diſcipline, obedience where?——
I have no leiſure now for words, CORNELIA!
Implore the gods to guard you and your children.

[*Exit with his attendants.*

Manent CORNELIA, *and* PRIEST.

CORNELIA.

Perhaps ere this CORNELIA has no children!
They both are fallen into the fatal ſnare.
Tremendous oracle! too late reveal'd.

PRIEST.

Abandon not thy ſoul to ſuch deſpair;
The ſword of war, devouring as it is,
Conſumes not all. The deſtin'd number die,
And from the bloodieſt field ſtill ſome return.

CORNELIA.

My ſons will ne'er return, I know them well.
The noble heart of TITUS, if he lives,
This inſtant ſwells with grief, and pride, and ſhame.
Will he, the author of this fatal combat,
Forſake the ſoldiers whom he led to ſlaughter;
Return diſcomfited, and ſav'd by flight,
To bear reproach, and bluſh in Aquileia?
He will not, holy Flamen! Nor will PAULUS:
Calm as he is, and maſter of himſelf,
My generous PAULUS will not leave his brother.
Alas! I never ſhall behold them more.
This is the evil that the gods foretold.
Ye conſtant matrons of Rome's former days!
Alas! I have no fortitude like yours.

Mine

Mine were no publick cares. In the mild ſhade
Of ſweet domeſtic happineſs I liv'd,
Till this fierce tempeſt roſe, the ſtorm of war,
Whoſe rage hath burſt on the Æmilian race.

PRIEST.

Lady, retire. I to the walls will go,
And learn what has befallen. Remember thou,
How oft, in human life, the great concluſion
Of fear'd and wiſh'd events mocks all conjecture.

Exeunt.

End of the firſt Act.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter PRIEST.

PRIEST.

TOO ſoon thy omens are accompliſh'd, JOVE!
O wretched parents! O devoted race!

Enter LUCIUS.

LUCIUS.

CORNELIA comes, impatient of thy ſtay.

PRIEST.

How ſhall my tongue perform a faithful office,
And tell CORNELIA what my eyes beheld?
Her ſons I ſaw ſurrounded by the foe;
And their ſmall troops ſeem'd like a bank of ſand,
Which, by the flowing tide encompaſs'd round,
Each moment waſtes and leſſens to the view.
Their wretched father ſaw, and could not ſave them.
For full oppos'd to him the tyrant ſtood
With half his hoſt embattled. Thrice ÆMILIUS
Came to the front of his remaining troops,
As if he meant to ruſh upon the foe,
And thrice the conſul pull'd the father back:
Then looking down and leaning on his ſword,
The tears faſt trickling down the warrior's cheeks,
He paus'd a while, and turn'd him to the city.

Enter CORNELIA.

CORNELIA.

Thou bring'ſt no comfort! Terror and diſmay

Are

Are written on thy brow! Haſte, tell me, Flamen.

PRIEST.

Behold a ſoldier bleeding from the field.

Enter GARTHA *wounded.*

CORNELIA.

'Tis the Numidian chief!

GARTHA.

Lady, theſe wounds,
Which bleed to death, make GARTHA not aſham'd
That he alone reviſits Aquileia.
Involuntary meſſenger am I
Of tidings harſh to tell. My fiery ſteed,
Gall'd with an arrow, bore me from the plain,
Where ſtill your valiant ſons maintain the fight,
And with amazing actions fate ſuſpend.
The boldeſt ſoldiers of the tyrant's hoſt
Shrink from their rage. Lady, I ſpeak with pain.
This to the conſul, I adviſ'd the ſally,
And fell into the ambuſh. I rejoice
That I ſhall not ſurvive it.

PRIEST.

Help! he faints.

GARTHA.

Oh would I had fallen at the feet of TITUS!

[*Enter Attendants.*]

PRIEST.

Support, and beat him hence.

CORNELIA.

O generous GARTHA!
Too dearly haſt thou prov'd thy conſtant faith.

[*Exit* GARTHA *ſupported.*

No more I hear the ſhouts of diſtant war,
'Tis horrid ſilence all. The work of death
Is over; doubt and fear are at an end.
Now certain anguiſh and deſpair prevail.

Enter

Enter ÆMILIUS *attended.*

My huſband!

ÆMILIUS.

Oh! CORNELIA! wretched dame!
Look not to me; I bring no conſolation,
I cannot comfort thee. I could not ſave
My children from deſtruction. Rigid duty
Made me ſpectator of their overthrow.
O fatal enſigns of unhappy power!
O had ÆMILIUS been a poor Centurion,
He might unheeded have forſook his ſtation,
And periſh'd with his children.

CORNELIA.

They are dead.
PAULUS and TITUS dead. Their mother lives!
Ye all directing gods, whom we adore,
Whom I with ſpotleſs hands have ever ſerv'd,
Is miſery like this my juſt reward?
Your deareſt gifts are to deſtruction turn'd.
Had I not been the fond, the happy mother
Of ſons, for whom all mothers envy'd me,
I had not been above all women wretched.

PRIEST.

Great are thy woes, CORNELIA, great indeed!
Yet not unfrequent in this changeful world
Are woes like thine; and greater ſtill than thine.
The famous matron of thy name and blood,
The firſt CORNELIA, ſaw her godlike ſons
In Rome betray'd, and ſlain by Roman hands.
And oft in every age have wretched mothers
Surviv'd their families', their country's ruin,
And liv'd ſad captives in a foreign land:
No kindred ear to hear, no eye to weep
In pity of their woes: no human face
For them to look on, but the hateful face

Of

Of foes, who made them childleſs, widows, ſlaves.
To thee remain thy huſband, and thy country,
In whoſe defence thy ſons ſo greatly died.
Thee Rome ſhall honour, and revere in thee
The ſacred memory of her heroes ſlain.

ÆMILIUS.

It is the right, the birthright, of our houſe,
For Rome to die: in every ſignal ſtrife,
In every ſtruggling period of the ſtate,
My ſires have bled. My ſons have choſe their time;
Bravely they fought, and nobly were they ſlain.
Rome ſtill ſhall ſtand, tho' the ÆMILII fall.
The tyrant's works are levell'd with the ground,
And his proud tower yet ſmokes upon the plain.
Our ramparts now his fierce aſſaults defy;
The Roman army, like a gather'd ſtorm,
Rolls towards him. My ſons ſhall be reveng'd;
My eyes ſhall ſee, my ſword ſhall ſhare, the vengeance.

CORNELIA.

Mean while, unburied on the bloody field,
Amidſt the common heap, my children lie.
Majeſtick PAULUS, and my lovely TITUS,
Is this the end of all your mother's care?
Some fierce barbarian now inſults the dead;
Adding diſhoneſt wounds. O! might not gold
Their dear remains redeem? Alas! alas!
'Tis the ſole conſolation I can hope for,
To ſave them from the beaſts and birds of prey,
That howl and ſcream around theſe fatal walls.
To fold once more their bodies in my arms;
To lay them decent on the funeral pile,
And o'er their aſhes pour a parent's heart.

ÆMILIUS.

Mindful of that ſad duty, I ſent forth
A herald to the tyrant, and expect

Each moment his return. The trumpet ſounds.

(Enter Herald, with an Officer of MAXIMIN's.*)*

'Tis he, and with him one whoſe lofty port,
And ſplendid arms, beſpeak his high command.

CORNELIA.

Forgive, O chief unknown, a mother's grief,
Which, ſhort'ning the reſpect thy preſence claims,
Haſtes to enquire, if MAXIMIN will give
The bodies of her children to the tomb?

OFFICER.

Far be its diſmal honours from your offspring!
Lady, your valiant ſons ſurvive the field.

CORNELIA.

Are they not dead? were not the ÆMILII ſlain
On yonder field? Their father ſaw them fall.

OFFICER.

Faint with long fighting, and encompaſt round,
Oppreſt with numbers, and born down they fell;
Not ſlain, nor greatly wounded, Captives now,
In their behalf, from MAXIMIN I come.

CORNELIA.

O! ſire of gods and men! eternal JOVE!
For ever prais'd be thy protecting arm!

OFFICER.

Upon their father now depends their fate;
'Tis his to grant what MAXIMIN requires.

CORNELIA.

Let his demands be boundleſs as the wiſh
Of avarice itſelf, they ſhall be granted.
Treaſures there are from age to age preſerv'd,
The acquiſition of our frugal ſires;
Well are the treaſures of our houſe beſtow'd,
If they redeem their lives who ſhould poſſeſs them.

OF-

OFFICER.

It is not gold that MAXIMIN requires.
To thee, ÆMILIUS, I addreſs my words:
Imperial MAXIMIN, lord of mankind,
Charges the ſenate and the Roman people
With breach of vows, and unprovok'd rebellion;
But chiefly thee, who firſt withſtood thy ſovereign,
And ſtopt the progreſs of his juſt revenge.
The righteous gods, he ſaith, to thee averſe,
Have made thy ſons the captives of his arms;
Them he has doom'd to death, and will this day
The ſentence execute, unleſs their father,
Before the ſun ſhall ſet, give up the city.

CORNELIA.

Relentleſs tyrant! O all-ſeeing gods!
How dire a proſpect opens to CORNELIA!

ÆMILIUS.

I ſtand not now in equal liſts with MAXIMIN,
Nor mean I here to plead the cauſe of Rome:
'Twould but offend thine ear. Yet tell thy lord,
He knows ÆMILIUS not, and therefore wrongs him
By this unworthy trial of his faith:
Unhappy, moſt unhappy, he may make me,
But he and fortune cannot make me baſe.

OFFICER.

Is this the anſwer I muſt bear to MAXIMIN?

ÆMILIUS.

What other anſwer could he hope from me?

OFFICER.

Think of the conſequence of this defiance.

ÆMILIUS.

I'll meet it when it comes: now I muſt think
Of truſt repos'd in me by injur'd Rome.

OFFICER.

Stout are thy words. But will this pride of ſpirit
Suſtain thee through the horrors that ſurround thee?

Thy lips have now pronounc'd thy children's doom,
Which executed, as it ſoon muſt be,
Will move the ſterneſt ſoldier of our camp
To tender pity. Never yet were ſeen
So brave a pair as thy unhappy ſons;
Nature on them has pour'd out all her gifts,
And dreſt their virtue in the faireſt form.

CORNELIA.

O thou, whoſe tongue in Roman accents ſpeaks,
Whoſe gentle aſpect ſhews a mind humane!
Take pity on the moſt unhappy parents,
That ever bore the name. This fatal day
Has prov'd too well the worth of theſe my ſons,
Whom nature, tho' they leſs deſerv'd, would love.
O! ſoften to the tyrant this refuſal.——
I know not what to ſay; I have no right,
But that which ſignal miſery confers,
To beg from thee aſſiſtance. If thou haſt
At home an anxious mother, or ſad ſpouſe,
Who daily trembles for thy noble life,
Think of her ſtate, and liſten to CORNELIA,
Whoſe tongue till now did never plead for favour.

ÆMILIUS.

O generous ſtranger! our misfortunes touch
Thy manly mind.

OFFICER.

No ſtranger I: behold
A Roman, and a friend. This helmet off,
Perhaps CORNELIA may remember VARUS.

CORNELIA.

VARUS! my friend! companion of my youth!
O heavy change of times! on other terms
In Rome, delightful Rome, we wont to meet.

VARUS.

Moſt true, CORNELIA.

CORNELIA.

And is VARUS come
To aid the tyrant's arms againſt his country?
Come the fierce herald of his kinſmen's doom?

VARUS.

With the ſame heart, the ſame unalter'd mind
To all that e'er he lov'd, is VARUS come.

ÆMILIUS.

Permit me, gallant VARUS! ſtill to claim
Thy friendſhip, tho' I ſtand the tyrant's foe.

VARUS.

ÆMILIUS! fortune rules the lives of men.
Had I been conſul, and poſſeſs'd in Rome
Of civil dignity; perhaps, like thee,
I ſhould have arm'd me in the ſenate's cauſe;
Whilſt thou, a ſoldier on the diſtant frontier,
Perhaps, like me, hadſt fought thy leader's quarrel.
The armies of the north acknowledge MAXIMIN.
I lead the Britiſh legions to the war:
But more of this hereafter. Thou haſt heard
My horrid meſſage, and haſt made ſuch anſwer
As well becomes a Roman and a conſul.

ÆMILIUS.

Barbarian as he is——forgive me, VARUS!
He cannot mean this threat'ning to fulfil.

VARUS.

O! truſt not the humanity of MAXIMIN.
If he's not cruel, why art thou in arms?
Beſides, his temper, ever fierce and ſavage,
Is now incens'd, enrag'd almoſt to madneſs,
By the wide waſting havock of this day.
His works are level'd, his beſt legions thin'd,
His nephew ALGAR ſlain by TITUS' hand.
In the firſt tranſport of his furious wrath,
He did devote to the infernal gods,
And ALGAR's ſhade, the priſ'ners of the field.

An old Ligurian, captain of his guards,
Step'd in and interpos'd this crafty counſel.——
Your anſwer I will bear, but give it colours
That may denote the dawning of ſubmiſſion,
And ſo retard——

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

An herald from the camp
Requires the tribune forthwith to return:
Impatient MAXIMIN ſtands on the plain,
Known by his purple and gigantick ſtature.

CORNELIA.

Dreadful impatience! moſt inhuman rage!
By the dear ſympathy of Roman blood,
Which in our veins from the ſame fountain flows,
Let me entreat thee, VARUS, to appeaſe
The angry tyrant. Repreſent ÆMILIUS
Diſpos'd to yield all that his honour can.
And if ſtern MAXIMIN prefers revenge
To profer'd gold, yet try if wealth can win
His friends and favourites to be more gentle.

VARUS.

He has no friends nor favourites; from fear
His ſoldiers ſerve, his officers obey.
I muſt be gone, for MAXIMIN brooks not
His orders ſlighted. Truſt my zeal, CORNELIA!
Had I but equal power, your ſons were free,
Conſul.

ÆMILIUS.

Let me conduct thee to the gate,
And tell thee, as we go, what yet remains
Untold of our condition.

Exeunt ÆMILIUS *and* VARUS.

COR-

CORNELIA.

Interpreter of heaven's myſterious will,
Augur rever'd! how will the evening cloſe
Of this diſtreſsful day? Haſte to repeat
The ſacred rites, and prove thy art divine.

PRIEST.

Such is my purpoſe, ſoon as Phœbus bows
From his meridian height. Lady, my mind
Has ponder'd MAXIMIN's abhorr'd demand.
One only courſe there is to end the ſtrife,
The dreadful ſtrife of nature and of duty,
In great ÆMILIUS' mind; and reconcile
The children's ſafety with the father's honour.

CORNELIA.

'Tis that I wiſh for, but of that deſpair.

PRIEST.

The Roman hoſt, by GORDIANUS led,
In three days hence reach Aquileia's walls;
Their near approach to MAXIMIN unknown.
Therefore the conſul, without breach of honour,
Without injuſtice to the Roman ſtate,
May ſtipulate with MAXIMIN, to yield
The city on the fourth returning day;
If not reliev'd. Ere that the chance of war
Raiſes the ſiege, or makes reſiſtance vain.

CORNELIA.

Wiſe are thy words; and now the dawn of hope
Breaks on my darkſome mind. Believe me, prieſt,
The loſs of my dear ſons in battle ſlain,
As once I thought them, was leſs terrible
Than the dire apprehenſion of that death
To which the tyrant dooms them; worſe to me,
And worſe, far worſe to them. Alas! my ſons!
Uncertain is your fate! who can foretel

The savage motions of the tyrant's will?
And yet this counsel seems the only means
Of preservation. Minister of heaven!
Let us retire, and at the altar bow
Of JOVE eternal, who thy heart inspir'd.

Exeunt.

End of the second Act.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter ÆMILIUS; *and from the other ſide of the ſtage,* LUCIUS.

LUCIUS.

TO every poſt and ſtation round the wall
Your orders have been borne. And each commander
With zeal obey'd.

ÆMILIUS.

The ſoldiers' countenance,
How ſeems it, LUCIUS?

LUCIUS.

Determin'd to the death.
Strong indignation at their leader's fate,
With grief and pity, o'er their viſage gleams;
But every paſſion ſettles to revenge.

ÆMILIUS,

LUCIUS! 'tis well. See that my ſteed be led
Accoutr'd to the gate. I know not, LUCIUS,
How ſoon I may beſtride him.

Exit LUCIUS.

ÆMILIUS *alone.*

This diſtreſs
Grows heavier every hour: like a green wound,
At firſt I felt it not; it rankles now.
Would I had liſten'd to the urgent voice
Of nature, when ſhe call'd me to the field!

Who

Who could have blam'd the paſſions of a father?
If Rome had blam'd me, in the ſilent tomb
Her voice had not been heard.

Enter CORNELIA.

CORNELIA.

Why tarries VARUS?

ÆMILIUS.

He will return, CORNELIA! doubt not that.
The tyrant knows the ſnare in which we're caught,
And to the uttermoſt will prove our ſouls
Before he breaks it.

CORNELIA.

By the gods inſpir'd,
The prieſt hath found the means to ſet us free,
If you conſent.

ÆMILIUS.

If I conſent? alas!
That doubt implies ſuſpicion of the means.

CORNELIA.

Hear me, and judge; capitulate with MAXIMIN,
In three days hence to yield up Aquileia,
If not reliev'd. Before that time expires,
The arms of Rome victorious raiſe the ſiege;
Or, if defeated, make reſiſtance vain.
Bend not thine eye, ÆMILIUS, on the ground!
The ſtricteſt law of duty is fulfill'd.
If thou reject'ſt this counſel, I will ſay,
Not MAXIMIN the tyrant ſlew my children,
But their own cruel father.

ÆMILIUS.

Oh! forbear!
My ſoul is rack'd; my heart aſunder torn,
The eyes of all the world on me are fix'd;
Rome and mankind from me expect their fate.
I muſt conſider this applauded counſel,
Ere I embrace.

COR-

CORNELIA.

This city is not Rome,
Nor your ſmall garriſon the Roman hoſt.
A part, a little part, a very grain
Of publick intereſt, in your mind outweighs
Your children, all your children. Oh! ÆMILIUS!
Alike the father and the mother bear
The name of parent; but a parent's love
Lives only in the tender mother's heart.

ÆMILIUS.

Firſt let us learn what anſwer VARUS brings.

Enter VARUS.

He comes, and various paſſions dim his face.

CORNELIA.

O! VARUS, VARUS!

VARUS.

Oh! too juſt thy fears!
Of my lov'd kinſmen unrevok'd the doom!
VARUS hath kneel'd in vain. Hard as the rocks
Of wild Dalmatia, is the tyrant's heart.
Incens'd at the refuſal which I bore,
His fury rages like a fire confin'd,
And threatens every quarter. Hear, ÆMILIUS,
And tremble now for Rome, as for thy children!

ÆMILIUS.

For Rome?

VARUS.

The tyrant (lend me patience, Heaven!
To ſpeak with calmneſs, I who ſerve him ſtill)
This day hath vow'd to raze imperial Rome.

ÆMILIUS.

Barbarian! why?

VARUS.

To fix his wavering hoſt,

To

To glut his legions with the mighty ſpoil.
Diſeaſe and famine prey upon his troops,
And rumour cries, that a relief is near.
The ſoldiers faint, and murmur at the length
And havock of this ſiege. The crafty tyrant
With ſound of trumpet thro' his camp proclaim'd,
That he will give the city to be ſack'd,
Raze her proud walls, and change the ſeat of empire.
The glad Barbarians ſhouted to the ſkies,
And mix'd with their applauſe unheard-of oaths
To die with MAXIMIN.

ÆMILIUS.

What ſaid the Romans?

VARUS.

In number few, and ſcatter'd thro' the bands,
They griev'd, but carefully ſuppreſt their ſorrow.

ÆMILIUS.

Was there no Roman near enough to plant
A dagger in the heart of MAXIMIN?

VARUS.

Before the tyrant reach the walls of Rome,
That Roman may be found.

ÆMILIUS.

Above the name
Of god-like SCÆVOLA his fame ſhall riſe.

VARUS.

The righteous gods, whom MAXIMIN contemns,
Have in their vengeance urg'd his frantic mind
By this decree to work his own perdition.
Long honour'd Rome! tho' thou haſt loſt ſo much
Of thy primæval ſplendor, ſtill my heart
Thy image worſhips; ſtill for thee I fought,
And from Siluria, to the ſavage ſhore
Of Caledonia, I thy trophies rear'd!
And ſhall thy ſoldier draw his ſword againſt thee,
Or ſtand a tame ſpectator of thy fall?

No!

No! I am thine, devoted, as of old
Thy darling ſons, when firſt thy glory roſe.
Nor ſhall thy turrets bow, imperial Rome!
Till low in duſt the head of VARUS lies.

ÆMILIUS.

There ſpoke a Roman!

CORNELIA.

I rejoice to hear
The voice of VARUS thus declare for Rome.
Her diſtant danger may thy arm avert!
But who defends my ſons, whoſe ſudden fate
This day decides?

VARUS.

O were it poſſible
To gain a ſhort delay! Time preſſes me;
For ſtrong in troops and terrible is MAXIMIN,
Nor am I yet prepar'd to riſe in arms.
In a few days — nay, if the Roman hoſt
Were near at hand,—

CORNELIA.

My huſband, ſpeak!

ÆMILIUS.

O! VARUS!
The fates are merciful. Peruſe theſe lines.

VARUS.

"In three days hence." Then, tyrant, I ſhall meet thee.
But what can ſheath this day the naked ſword?

ÆMILIUS.

A truce I'll offer, bind myſelf by vow
(Nor is the practice new or ſtrange in war)
Within a certain time to yield the city,
If not reliev'd; the time, this ſcroll directs,
The fourth revolving day.

VARUS.

I ſee their aim.
Ere that, the blow is ſtruck by GORDIANUS;

Ere

Ere that ſhall VARUS ſpread his Roman eagle,
And chace the raven of Dalmatia home.

ÆMILIUS.

Thou think'ſt the tyrant will accept thoſe terms?

VARUS.

I hold it certain: he can wiſh no more;
Unknown to him th' approach of GORDIANUS.
By MARS, the father of the Roman race,
Whoſe ſpear omnipotent in battle rules,
My life ſhall ſtand betwixt your ſons and death

CORNELIA.

O beſt of friends! This is the work of heaven,
Whoſe awful purpoſes, unconſcious man
Promotes, and fondly thinks he ſerves his own.
Thus from remoteſt Britain's frozen ſhore
The tyrant to his aid the warrior calls,
Who comes, a weapon in the hand of JOVE,
To ſmite the proud uſurper, and preſerve
My children.

ÆMILIUS.

Yea, his country and mankind.

VARUS.

May the event theſe pleaſing hopes fulfil.
I, that have been a ſoldier from my youth,
And fought out many a hard unequal conflict
With tribes and nations who no mercy know,
Yet never felt my boſom thus alarm'd.

ÆMILIUS.

For us, for Rome, thy Roman mind is mov'd.

VARUS.

In a new path I tread. I, that ne'er us'd
Diſſimulation, muſt a while diſſemble.
Soon may the hour of nobler action come!
When in the front of my brave troops I ſtand,
And dare the hateful tyrant with my ſword,
My heart ſhall beat no more. My friends, farewel!

COR-

CORNELIA.

The gods protect thee, VARUS!

VARUS.

Conſul, 'tis meet
You hold your troops prepar'd, and from the walls
Each motion watch, that riſes in our camp.

ÆMILIUS.

My vigilance ſhall equal the occaſion.

[*Exit* VARUS.

'Tis, as thou ſaid'ſt, indeed the hand of heaven!
Ye powers ſupreme! who guide the line of fate,
Whoſe winding courſe eludes the ſenſe of man,
Who could have thought that from our deep diſtreſs,
My ſons' captivity, and threaten'd death,
Should ſpring the ruin of inſulting MAXIMIN?

CORNELIA.

Him, who contemns the gods, the gods will puniſh
Now or hereafter. To the altar I
Of JOVE will haſten, and his power implore.
Here LUCIUS comes.

Enter LUCIUS.

ÆMILIUS.

What tidings?

LUCIUS.

Good, my lord!
Far on the diſtant heights that cloſe the vale,
The watchmen have deſcried a welcome ſight,
Eagles and ſtandards glittering in the ſun,
Squadrons of horſe that move along the hill.
Your faithful ſoldiers in loud ſhouts rejoice,
And hail the van of GORDIANUS' hoſt.

ÆMILIUS.

Too ſoon, great gods! they come.

LUCIUS.

Too ſoon, my lord!

That

That cannot be. In a moſt happy hour
Relief approaches. For in every ſtreet
Th' afflicted citizens exclaim againſt you,
And, as they paſs, upbraid the patient ſoldier
For tame ſubmiſſion to your rigid will;
Which even your children's danger cannot bend.

ÆMILIUS.

Would to the gods their murmurs and reproaches
Were all I had to bear!

Enter a Herald and an Officer from MAXIMIN.

Now burſts the ſtorm.

CORNELIA.

This is not VARUS. Sternly he comes on.
This is the dreadful harbinger of death.

OFFICER.

Conſul! I come from MAXIMIN; that prince
Whoſe wrath is terrible, now burns with wrath
At thee, and ſends me to denounce his vengeance.
He hath diſcover'd thy unworthy arts,
The fraudulent propoſal of a truce,
When thou did'ſt know the rebel hoſt drew near.
Hither I come to cut all treaties ſhort,
And to pronounce thy ſons' immediate death,
Unleſs, without delay, thou yield'ſt this city,
Thyſelf, thy legions, freely to his mercy.

ÆMILIUS.

A cruel meſſage harſhly thou deliver'ſt,
The dreadful echo of thy threat'ning lord.
He grows in his demands.

OFFICER.

'Tis fit he ſhould
When baſely dealt with: treachery ſtill finds
It's due reward from him.

ÆMILIUS.

Ha! who art thou,

Who

Who dar'ſt preſume thus to addreſs the conſul?

OFFICER.

I am the ſlave of MAXIMIN; if thou
Haſt any other name, it is a worſe one,
Rebel, proud Roman!

ÆMILIUS.

Thou'rt protected, ſlave!
Thy character is ſacred; elſe—Barbarian!
Return to MAXIMIN, the terms I ſent
By VARUS I adhere to, and expect
Another anſwer, by a gentler herald.

CORNELIA.

Thou art no Roman. Wilt thou deign to tell
Thy name and country?

OFFICER.

DUMNORIX my name,
My country Gaul.

CORNELIA.

And of Ligurian race,
Chief of the band Pretorian, art thou not?

OFFICER.

I am, and faithful to the prince I ſerve.

CORNELIA.

Faithful to evil, falſe to all that's good!
To nature and humanity a traitor;
Contriver of the murder of my children!
My ſoul by ſtrong antipathy divin'd thee,
And ſhudder'd at thee as her evil genius.

ÆMILIUS.

CORNELIA, beware, thou wrong'ſt thyſelf,
Thus to expoſe to him thy wounded heart.

OFFICER.

VARUS, your countryman, hath told you, Lady!
What counſel I ſuggeſted to my prince.
This I expected from a Roman meſſenger,
Whoſe treachery his maſter ſoon ſhall know,

He told you true. From me the counsel came;
I thought the dames of Rome had lov'd their children.

[*Exit* DUMNORIX.

CORNELIA.

Oh! my husband! What remedy, what hope!

ÆMILIUS.

In VARUS still I trust. The troops of Rome
Are near at hand. That insolent Ligurian
Hath chaf'd me to the height. O! awful Rome!
Where are thy honours? Queen of all the earth!
How art thou fallen! When a vile slave like this,
Insults thy consul, and decrees the doom
Of thy Patrician race! If this must be,
'Tis time to die; we all have liv'd too long.

CORNELIA.

I felt the insult, but my feeble anger
Blaz'd for a moment only. Other passions
Soon quench'd my indignation. O! my children!

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

To arms, my lord! The enemy comes on.

ÆMILIUS.

We are prepar'd, for MAXIMIN is known.
I look'd for this attack. Against what gate
Bend they their force?

OFFICER.

They threaten every gate;
For all their legions move. Distinct I saw
Three mighty columns shoaling to the plain,
And in their front are carriages advanc'd
Loaded with beams and rafters, fit to frame
Some engine strong, against our batter'd walls.

ÆMILIUS.

Be not afraid. [*To* CORNELIA.]

[*A shout.*]

What means that fearful cry?

CORNELIA.

A cry! it was a groan, a dreadful groan,
As if a multitude, a legion died.

ÆMILIUS.

Farewel!

CORNELIA.

My lord, one moment ſtay, behold!

Enter LUCIUS.

ÆMILIUS.

From whence that diſmal cry?

OFFICER.

Alas! alas!
It was the people's voice, the ſoldiers voice,
Lamenting for your ſons.

CORNELIA.

Already! heaven!

ÆMILIUS.

Say, what has befallen?

OFFICER.

Still, my lord, they live;
But on the verge of death the brothers ſtand.

CORNELIA.

Still they live!

ÆMILIUS.

Uninterrupted now relate,
Without a comment, what thy eyes have ſeen.

OFFICER.

The hoſt of MAXIMIN for fight array'd,
In three huge columns onward ſlowly mov'd,
And when their van had reach'd the little hill,
From whence the fountain ſprings, faſt by the wall,
The army halted: then appear'd a band,
Buſy artificers, who rear'd in haſte,
A pile we wonder'd at; but ſoon was chang'd

Our wonder into ſorrow, when we knew
It was a ſcaffold; and beheld your ſons,
Guarded and bound, draw near. That ſpectacle
Produc'd the cry.

CORNELIA.

O! inſupportable!
My lord! my huſband! oh!

ÆMILIUS.

Matron, retire,
And hide thy anguiſh from the common eye.

CORNELIA.

Ha! Whither doſt thou go?

ÆMILIUS.

Streight to the gate.

CORNELIA.

Where thou art, I will be. I cannot leave thee,
Have mercy upon me, your ſons, yourſelf,
And to neceſſity a little yield;
Intreat a ſhort delay, new terms propound,
Let not your children die.

ÆMILIUS.

Think'ſt thou thy ſons
Will chuſe a life, bought by their father's ſhame?
If right my ſoul divines of both my boys,
What they dread moſt this inſtant, is to live,
Redeem'd inglorious with my honour loſt.

CORNELIA.

I am encompaſſed; on a pointed rock
I ſtand, a dreadful gulph on either ſide.

ÆMILIUS.

The time is not expir'd; ſome hours the ſun
Hath yet to fall; this awful preparation
Is meant to terrify and ſhake my ſoul,
That I may bow before the next demand.
Go to the palace, when a meſſage comes
From the fell tyrant, thou ſhalt hear it anſwered.

CORNELIA.

Deal not, my lord, deceitfully with me.
I have a right, a mother's right.

ÆMILIUS.

Be calm,
Let me conjure thee by the ſacred names
Of thy great anceſtors, who died for Rome,
Remember them, and prove thyſelf their daughter.

[*Exit* ÆMILIUS.

CORNELIA *alone.*

My anceſtors! alas! ill-omen'd names!
Ye ſhades of heroes, o'er the world renown'd
For virtue, and for great misfortunes fam'd!
Why ſhould I think of you, but to confirm
The dire preſage that riſes from my heart?
Your matchleſs worth exempted not from ills,
But was the cauſe recorded of your ruin.
Sprung from your blood, I fear that I am born
Heir to the fortunes of the fated line.

[*Exit* CORNELIA.

End of the third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter LUCIUS.

I Will report the truth; too viſible
Is the ſad object from our crowded walls.
Unhappy mother! whom exceſs of anguiſh
Drives to purſue additional diſtreſs!
O! good and great ÆMILIUS! how my ſoul
Is griev'd for thee, and for thy valiant ſons!
Whom I ſo oft have carried in my arms.
My generous maſter made me free in vain;
Still I remain'd a voluntary ſlave,
Prefer'd his ſervice in a foreign land
To ſweet LARISSA, and my native ſhore.
My only ſon, under his roof brought forth,
Born on the day that gave young TITUS birth,
Bred up with him in every Roman art,
Unlike the rudeneſs of our ſimple land,
Wild with deſpair, vows he will not outlive
His dear, dear lord! his kind, his noble maſter.

Enter CORNELIA.

CORNELIA.

Calamity comes on me like a torrent,
And overwhelms a mind not us'd to woe.
Ha! LUCIUS, haſt thou ſeen my hapleſs ſons?
Say, can I view them from th' adjacent wall?

LU-

LUCIUS.

Too well, alas! conſpicuous they ſtand.

CORNELIA.

Lucius, lead on.

LUCIUS.

Reluctant I obey.
I fear the tranſports of a mother's mind.

CORNELIA.

I will behold them; I will ſee my children,
Whate'er befal me; I will gaze upon them,
Tho' frantic madneſs ſhould my ſoul ſurpriſe:
All leſſer fears are in a greater loſt,
Haſte and conduct me.

LUCIUS.

The ſad ſpectacle
Is near at hand.

CORNELIA.

O! feeble limbs that fail,
And weakly ſerve the ſtrength of my deſpair!

LUCIUS.

'Tis nature ſhrinks. O! lady! yet be warn'd.

CORNELIA.

No; if my wretched limbs refuſe their office,
The arms of ſlaves ſhall bear me to the wall.
I'm firmer now, proceed.

LUCIUS.

The herald comes.

CORNELIA.

The laſt of heralds; but I will not tarry.

[*Exeunt* CORNELIA *and* LUCIUS.

Enter Herald and VARUS.

VARUS.

This is the place appointed by the conſul;

Find, and inform him quickly of my preſence.

[*Exit Herald.*

VARUS *alone.*

They muſt not die. It were a deed, to ſtrike
Horror from pole to pole. The Parthian fierce,
And the wild Moor would tremble at the tale,
And mark accurſt the pale of Roman empire.
Tyrant, too ſavage over beaſts to rule!
Fidelity to thee were horrid treaſon
To human nature, to the gracious gods,
Who o'er diſtreſt humanity preſide.
This day has full diſplay'd the tyrant's ſoul,
And ripen'd thoughts long growing in my breaſt.
'Tis vain to think of antient freedom now;
The ſenate, and the people are no more.
Rome's vaſt dominions for the ſcepter call,
The world ſubdu'd, one maſter muſt command.
But let us have a monarch, not a tyrant.

Enter ÆMILIUS.

ÆMILIUS,

VARUS return'd! can MAXIMIN relent!

VARUS.

Never! his rage would ſtab the hoary Prieſt
Before the altar. Hardly have I gain'd
This laſt renewal of the firſt conditions.

ÆMILIUS.

Where is the hoſt of Rome?

VARUS.

Far diſtant ſtill.
Thoſe ſquadrons, that in evil hour alarm'd
The tyrant, and defeated our deſign,
The zeal of GORDIANUS had advanced
To chear your troops, with promiſe of relief.

ÆMILIUS.

'Tis fate o'erwhelms us. To the tyrant bear
My firſt and lateſt anſwer. With delight,
With tranſport I would die to ſave my ſons;
But will not ſave them by an act of baſeneſs.

VARUS.

With fortitude, with dignity, ÆMILIUS,
Thou haſt ſuſtain'd this cruel ſhock of fortune,
And juſtify'd the ſentiments of Rome,
That plac'd her ſovereign confidence in thee.
Now hear the counſel of a faithful friend,
Anxious for thee, and zealous for his country.

ÆMILIUS.

No vain deſire of glory rules my breaſt;
I feel the throbs of nature: all I wiſh
Is to be juſt to Rome; I envy not,
Nor emulate the older Brutus' fame.

VARUS.

The profer'd terms accept, and ſave thy children.
Rome ſhall not ſuffer: when her troops draw near,
I will forſake the tyrant's ſhatter'd ſide,
And fix the fortune of the future field.

ÆMILIUS.

Compaſſion dictates this deluſive counſel;
Thy pity for a miſerable father;
But chance may marr thy generous deſign,
And deep diſmay for Aquileia loſt,
Confound the legions that contend for Rome.
Then whither ſhall forlorn ÆMILIUS fly?
Where ſhall he hide him from reproach and ſhame?
What joy, what comfort, will his children yield,
When he and they with infamy muſt dwell?
A new companion to our noble race.
No! rather let the blow tremendous fall,
And cruſh us in the path our fathers trod.
I ſee the image of my bleeding country:

I hear the voice of Rome her conſul call;
The choſen guardian in her laſt extreme.
City of gods! mother of heroes fam'd
Like gods of old! ſhall I abandon thee,
For whom ſo many noble youths have died,
So many fathers?

Enter CORNELIA.

Now, my heart, be firm.

CORNELIA.

Where is ÆMILIUS? the hard-hearted father,
Who whets the tyrant's ſword againſt his children!

ÆMILIUS.

Alas, CORNELIA!

CORNELIA.

I have ſeen my ſons,
Both bound with chains: I ſaw the deadly ax,
And the ſtern villain ſtanding by their ſide.
Conſul! I kneel to thee! O hear thy wife!
Hear me, my huſband, whilſt I yet have ſenſe
And reaſon left to regulate my words.
O drive me not to madneſs, to deſpair:
Already wavering on the brink I ſtand,
In agony extreme.

ÆMILIUS.

Truſt in the gods;
They ſooth the agonies of guiltleſs woe,
But to deſpair reſign the ſelf-condemn'd.
O my beloved wife, do not aſſail
Thy huſband's ſoul, that labours to be juſt.
Heaven knows how dear to my afflicted heart
Thou, and the pledges of our virtuous love,
Have ever been; more dear than ever now.
But if their danger, and thy fears ſhould bend
My yielding mind to baſeneſs and to ſhame,

Re-

Remorſe would break the concord of our love,
And hate ſucceed to criminal affection.

CORNELIA.

Me only hate; acquit thy noble ſons,
Too like thyſelf; ÆMILIUS, had'ſt thou ſeen,
Thy ſons, as I beheld them from the ramparts.
With head erect, and high, my PAULUS ſtood.
I knew his ſtature eminent; unmov'd,
And ſtedfaſt was his geſture, firm he ſeem'd,
Like a ſtrong caſtle on its rocky baſe.
The port of TITUS ſhew'd a mind leſs calm.
Around he look'd, and from his ſcornful eyes,
Threw on his foes defiance, and diſdain.
At laſt in earneſt ſpeech the brothers join'd.
I ſaw them whiſper; PAULUS bow'd his head.
The multitude, long ſilent at my preſence,
Lamented then; the weeping mothers claſp'd
Their infants to their breaſts, and look'd at me.
I left the walls, to find thee out, my huſband!
And lead thee thither, that thou might'ſt relent.

ÆMILIUS.

Relent, CORNELIA! O eternal powers,
That ſee the anguiſh of my tortur'd ſoul,
Suſtain me ſtill; let not my duty yield
To the ſtrong yearning of a father's heart.

CORNELIA.

Why ſpeaks not VARUS? Has he too conſpir'd
Againſt me and my children?

VARUS.

I have ſpoke,
And told the conſul, that his ſons may live,
And Roman arms o'er MAXIMIN prevail.

CORNELIA.

What would'ſt thou more? inexorable man!

VARUS.

VARUS.

I ſee the bottom of thy troubled mind,
And in this awful hour revere thy virtue,
Which ſtands aloof, and trembles at diſhonour:
But hear this new addition to my counſel;
Soldiers I have, in every danger try'd,
Bred to hard ſervice in our Britiſh wars,
Accuſtom'd to explore the foreſts wild,
Alone, amidſt the perils of the night,
And mingle fearleſs with the ſavage foes;
Diſguis'd in their attire and uncouth arms,
Of thoſe the moſt expert, I will diſpatch,
That GORDIANUS may his arms advance.

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

My Lord, your ſon approaches.

CORNELIA.

Ha! my ſon!

OFFICER.

TITUS your ſon, attended by a herald,
Slow thro' the gazing multitude proceeds,
Who weep and bleſs him.

ÆMILIUS.

Ha! what change is this?

OFFICER.

The herald as he paſſes ſcatters gladneſs,
Saying that TITUS comes to end the war,
And to compaſſion move his father's mind.

ÆMILIUS.

TITUS! does TITUS come to plead compaſſion?
Now deſtiny, thou trampleſt down ÆMILIUS.
Go tell him, Herald, that I will not ſee him;
Let him not come to hear me curſe the hour
That made me father of a ſon like him.

COR-

CORNELIA.

Judge not ſo raſhly, ſee and hear thy ſon.

ÆMILIUS.

Mention him not; that father has my envy
Who mourneth o'er his ſons in battle ſlain.
Short-ſighted mortals! Let no man repine
When fate bereaves him of the child he loves;
Amidſt his anguiſh let him think of mine,
And that will comfort him.

CORNELIA.

This is not well,
Nor like my ſon; yet valour cannot change
Its quality ſo quickly. He hath prov'd
His dauntleſs courage. Death in terror clad
Could not diſmay him. But his noble mind
Is ſway'd by pity of his brother's fate,
In his involv'd.

Enter TITUS.

ÆMILIUS.

Gods! unabaſh'd he ſeems,
Nor at his moſt inglorious purpoſe bluſhes.

[ÆMILIUS *turns from him.*

CORNELIA.

Dear to thy mother ſtill.

TITUS. [*To his father.*]

Turn not away,
Nor hold thy TITUS of one look unworthy.

ÆMILIUS.

Art thou my TITUS? Thou that fear'ſt to die,
And comes a ſervile ſuppliant for life!
With coward prayers to ſeduce the conſul.
No! thou art not my ſon. I had a ſon!
Whoſe only fault was valour to exceſs,
Whoſe fatal courage was the ſource of ills
Which he was bound in honour to ſuſtain.

Thou

Thou art not he! thou ſcandal to thy country!
Thou tool of MAXIMIN.

TITUS.

Wrong not thy ſon.
Faſt roll the number'd moments of my life,
And I muſt haſten to redeem my fame.

CORNELIA.

I fear, but know not what his words portend.

TITUS.

I have deceiv'd the tyrant, and am come
No meſſenger or counſellor of ſhame.
The cauſe of honour, of my father's honour,
The cauſe of Rome againſt myſelf I plead,
And in my voice the noble PAULUS ſpeaks.
Let no man pity us; aloft we ſtand
On a high theatre, objects I think
Of admiration, and of envy rather.
The tyrant and his menac'd deaths we ſcorn,
The chearful victims of our ſacred country.

ÆMILIUS.

Hear this! O earth and heaven! my ſon! my pride!
Come to thy father's arms; now, now I know
My blood again. O bitter pleaſing hour!
For I muſt loſe thee, loſe thee, O my hero!
Now when I love thee beſt, and moſt admire.

CORNELIA.

Preſerve that virtue which you thus admire,
My ſon! my huſband! VARUS pity me.

TITUS.

This to prevent I came; the force I fear'd
Of ſtrong affection, and a mother's tears.
We ſaw the buſy heralds come and go,
And trembled leſt the conſul might be won;
For ebbing reſolution ne'er returns,
But ſtill falls farther from its former ſhore.

To

To aid my father in this trying hour
Did I aſſume a daſtard's vile diſguiſe.

ÆMILIUS.

And did I meet thee with reproach and anger?
With ſcorn encounter my devoted ſon,
Who came to ſtrengthen and ſupport his ſire?
Forgive me, laſt of the Æmilian line!
Pure and unſtain'd the current of our blood
Ends as it long has flow'd.

CORNELIA.

O VARUS! ſpeak,
Tell them, thou guardian angel of thy country!
That Rome does not this ſacrifice demand.
Why ſhould they die in vain?

VARUS.

Thou noble youth,
Whoſe life more and more precious ſtill I deem,
I am the friend of Rome; of yonder hoſt
No ſlender part under my enſigns move.
With them I watch the tyrant's overthrow,
And guard my country with a ſtronger power,
Than Aquileia, and her feeble walls.
Great is thy glory, thou haſt reach'd the top
Of magnanimity in bloom of youth,
The REGULUS reviv'd of antient Rome;
Inflexible to terror, yield to prudence,
No tongue ſhall tax thine or thy father's fame.

TITUS.

Renowned VARUS! often have I heard
Of thee, and of thy virtues; oft rejoic'd,
That I could claim affinity with them;
But not the ſanction of thy honour'd voice,
Not all the credence due to worth like thine,
Can move my ſtedfaſt mind. There is but one,
One only path which mortals ſafely tread,

The ſacred path of rectitude and truth.
I follow, tho' it leads me to the tomb.
Forgive me, noble Roman! o'er thy head,
Perhaps, this inſtant dire diſcovery hangs,
And thou and Rome are loſt, and baſely loſt.
No, let the conſul, as he ought, defy
The tyrant's threat'ning, and rely on heav'n.
For me, and PAULUS too, our hearts are fix'd,
Deliberation of our ſtate is vain:
For if the conſul ſhould this city yield,
Inevitable death abides his ſons.

CORNELIA.

Eternal Gods! thy myſtic words explain.

TITUS.

A ſolemn oath determin'd we have ſworn,
Ne'er to ſurvive th' ignominious ranſom.
Reſtor'd to liberty, to death we fly,
And periſh mutual by each other's ſword.

ÆMILIUS.

Immortal Gods! who gave me ſons like theſe,
Forſake them not, but guard your work divine.

CORNELIA.

My beſt-belov'd! my darling! my fond heart
Bleeds tenderneſs for thee. But there is ſomething
So awful and ſo great, a glory round thee,
Which dazzles and o'erwhelms me. O my ſon!
Is life a burden? Lov'ſt thou not thy parents?
Who for the love of thee would gladly die.

TITUS.

Think not, O beſt of mothers, beſt of women,
That with unfilial arrogance I ſpeak.
My heart is full this inſtant of affection,
Hard to ſuppreſs. Dear to my ſoul are thoſe
I leave behind, bitter to me their ſorrows.
But deſtiny ſupreme hath mark'd my way:

And I accept what honour cannot ſhun.
By trivial accident, by various ills
Fatal to man, thou might'ſt have loſt thy ſons,
And they in dark oblivion would have ſlept:
But now I ſee the goal that JOVE aſſigns,
And glory terminates our ſhort career.
Be this thy comfort; I avow it mine.
Admir'd and mourn'd by Rome, for Rome we die,
Of fate ſecure, immortal is our fame,
And ſpotleſs laurels deck thy childrens tomb.

CORNELIA.

Myſterious Powers! how ſtrange is my diſtreſs!
Thy virtue, TITUS, rends thy mother's heart!
Ev'n now the grandeur of thy tow'ring ſoul
Exalts my humbler mind to thoughts like thine:
But when thou goeſt, alas! I ſink again,
Like the weak Pythian when her God has left her.

TITUS.

My father!

ÆMILIUS.

O my ſon, thou art the judge
And arbiter of fate. Time, rapid fly,
And bring a joyful victory to Rome.
Let me but ſee the ſcale of combat turn'd,
And die in glad aſſurance of her ſafety.

VARUS.

The hero's fire invades my ſecret ſoul:
Like his my boſom burns. You ſhall not die,
[*To* TITUS.]
Unaided and alone. Perhaps the Gods! —
I know not that; but I will raiſe a pile
Of glorious ruin. Shine, ye ſtars of Rome.
Firſt in the column ſtand my Britiſh bands.
[*To* ÆMILIUS.]
Prepare your ſquadrons, and protract the time
Of his return.

Enter PRIEST *of* JUPITER *and the younger* LUCIUS.

PRIEST.

Conſul of mighty Rome!
Firm be the purpoſe of the preſent hour,
The ſire of Gods a happy ſign hath giv'n:
Truſt in the aid of heav'n's eternal king,
His adamantine ages JOVE extends.

VARUS.

Romans and friends, farewell! Undaunted TITUS,
I go to aid thee too with mortal arms. [*Exit* VARUS.

TITUS.

Deem me not impious, ſervant of the Gods!
Thee, and thy ſacred office I revere,
But ſigns and omens may our thoughts deceive.
Men may miſtake the purpoſes of heav'n;
The ſhield of JOVE guards not the brave man's life,
Nor wards his body from the mortal blow.
A ſhield there is, that never can be pierc'd,
The heav'nly armour of a mind reſolv'd.
That mail, who wears, againſt all force is clad,
And triumphs o'er the fate by which he falls.

Enter OFFICER.

OFFICER.

My Lords! th' aſſembled citizens demand
An audience.

ÆMILIUS.

Tell them, No. It will require
My preſence to appeaſe their fearful clamour.
Retire, my ſon, and till the herald comes
A ſad but dear ſociety enjoy. *Exeunt.*

End of the fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Trumpets ſound.

Enter TITUS, CORNELIA *and* ÆMILIUS.

TITUS.

FOR me the trumpet ſounds.

CORNELIA:

O dreadful ſound!

TITUS.

The hour is come.

CORNELIA.

Alas! not yet, my ſon!
To the laſt moment ſtay. So VARUS counſell'd.

TITUS.

The herald's at the gate. I muſt not ſtay,
Nor linger, like a criminal oppreſt
With ſhameful fears. Farewell, my ſire, farewell!

CORNELIA.

Thou goeſt to die, and ſay'ſt thou but farewell?
It were too little, if from Rome thou went'ſt
A ſportful journey to the Baian ſhore.
But thou art going never to return,
To the dark region,

TITUS.

Where all men have gone:
Where all muſt go; but glorious is the path
Thy offspring tread. An honourable death

Is the ſole gift which fate cannot reſume.
Methinks it ſuits us not thus to diſcourſe:
Combat thy grief, and make our parting noble.

CORNELIA.

Nature forbids. I cannot conquer nature.
Speak not ſo firm, look not ſo unconcern'd:
Leave in thy mother's ear ſome tender words,
Fit for eternal memory.

TITUS.

If thou lov'ſt,
O ſpare thy ſon, leſt MAXIMIN ſhould think
He has ſubdued me. No. He ſhall not ſee
Upon my cheek the veſtige of a tear.

ÆMILIUS.

Thy ſpirit ſhall inſpire thy father's ſoul,
Till to the ſhades he ſinks, to meet thee there:
Then to the founders of immortal Rome,
I'll point my heroes.—To my PAULUS this,

[*Embraces.*]

And now, farewell.

CORNELIA.

Alas! thy ſire deſpairs,
He quits thy hand; till now I ne'er deſpair'd.
The moment is arriv'd, the dreadful moment,
I durſt not think of, and cannot endure.
O TITUS! TITUS! let me claſp thy neck.
My ſon! thoſe eyes I never ſhall behold
In living luſtre more.

Enter LUCIUS.

LUCIUS.

Strife and confuſion
Reign in the tyrant's camp. Himſelf I ſaw
Leap from his high tribunal.

ÆMILIUS.

Sound th' alarm.
This is the work of VARUS.

TI-

TITUS.

Conſul, beware.
Hoſtility from thee is breach of faith,
Whilſt I remain.

ÆMILIUS.

Too true, my ſon! Begone,
And free thy father's ſword.

CORNELIA. [*Embraces him.*]

He ſhall not go.
One inſtant ſaves him, keeps him from the ſtorm.
My arms have ſtrength enough to hold my ſon,
My only left, for now his brother dies.

TITUS.

Nothing ſhall hold me. I have deeply ſworn,
And left my brother pledge of my return;
Left him, to bear alone the tyrant's rage,
To die by torture, if I break my faith.
Thus would'ſt thou buy my life! Unhand me ſtreight,
Or I muſt tear myſelf.

ÆMILIUS.

Thy frenzy, woman,
Cuts off our laſt reſource, adds ſhame to ruin;
I will not, cannot ſuccour noble VARUS,
And much wrong'd PAULUS, till thou ſett'ſt him free.
The clamour ceaſes, Oh! what haſt thou done?

CORNELIA.

There, let him go, and periſh with his brother.
Forgive this action; for exceſs of anguiſh
Deprives CORNELIA of her reaſon's aid.
Now comes the raven that ſtill bodes my woes.

Enter Herald and DUMNORIX.

DUMNORIX.

Captive, the time's expir'd.

TITUS.

Soldier, 'tis well.
Turn to the gate thy ſteps, I follow thee.

DUMNORIX.

Thou art the firſt that e'er employ'd deceit
Againſt himſelf; thy artifice prevails.
[*To* ÆMILIUS.]
Roman! once more, tho' not from love, I ſpeak;
Yield thee, for now thou haſt no hope in VARUS.

ÆMILIUS.

Who told thee, that my reſolution ſtood
On ſuch a hope? What hath befallen VARUS?

DUMNORIX.

His treaſon is detected; he himſelf
Seiz'd, and condemn'd with thy raſh ſons to die.

CORNELIA.

Eternal gods! — How did the legions brook
Their valiant leader's fate?

DUMNORIX.

Her tongue betrays
Your ſecret expectation of revolt,
Where all is calm ſubmiſſion. VARUS came
From hence, entruſted with your laſt reſolve,
And, like an orator, addreſt himſelf
To the tribunal, with a voice ſo rais'd,
That every ſoldier in the circle heard;
And as he told a tale to move their pity,
A ſudden murmur roſe. The emperor
Leapt from his throne, and call'd aloud to ſeize
The artful traytor. Soon his guards obey'd.

ÆMILIUS.

VARUS, the noble VARUS, too muſt die.
But there are gods above! Vengeance is theirs,
The tyrant yet ſhall feel.

CORNELIA.

Will vengeance raiſe
My children from the tomb?

DUMNORIX.

Thou queſtion'ſt well.
Matron, I pity thee. Canſt thou not move
Thy huſband's heart to ſpare his dying ſons,
Nor win thy children to conſent to live?

CORNELIA.

Thou pity me! thou, whoſe inhuman ſoul
Devis'd the counſel that has caus'd my woe.
In vain doſt thou attempt my troubled mind;
Had I a magick voice, to cleave the earth,
To pluck the ſun and moon from their high ſphere,
Unmov'd my huſband and my ſons would hear me.

TITUS.

This ineffectual conference I'll end.
[*To* DUMNORIX.]
'Tis not your office, ſir! to counſel here,
Conduct me to the camp.

DUMNORIX.

I will, be ſure.
The death that thou haſt courted, now abides thee:
Come, try the rough embrace.

TITUS.

Lead on, Ligurian!
I anſwer to thy lord.
[*Going.*]

CORNELIA.

TITUS, my ſon!
Break, break my heart, for I can bear no more.
[*ſwoons.*]

TITUS.

She faints, ſupport her; now let me eſcape
From her affliction: think of Rome, my father! [*Exit.*
[CORNELIA *is carried off.*]

Manet ÆMILIUS.

ÆMILIUS.

Of Rome! aye, and of thee, of thee, my ſon,
And of thy brother. O unequall'd pair,
Your deeds, your deſtiny have rais'd your ſire
Above the pitch of man. My heart is ſteel,
I weep not, nor complain. Relentleſs fiend,
Inhuman MAXIMIN! for thee I live;
To bury in thy hated breaſt my ſword,
Then die upon the blow.

Enter LUCIUS.

LUCIUS.

Thy faithful ſlave,
Uncall'd, intrudes upon his maſter's woe.
Reſign not to deſpair thy noble mind,
Still there is hope.

ÆMILIUS.

Affectionate old man!
Thou ſpeak'ſt thy earneſt wiſh, but my frail hopes
Were wreck'd with VARUS.

LUCIUS.

Oft when wiſdom fails,
Chance interpoſes, and atchieves the deed.
The Britiſh legions, wheeling from their hoſt,
An angry parley with the tyrant hold,
And every rank re-echoes VARUS' name.

ÆMILIUS.

Immortal gods! Would I were at their head
A ſingle ſpark may kindle up the flame.

LUCIUS.

My ſon, devoted to his maſter's fate,
Arm'd like a ſoldier of the tyrant's guard,
Mix'd with the herald's train,

ÆMILIUS.

O generous youth!
Perhaps——but I have nouriſh'd hope too much.
He who diveſts him of that conſtancy
Which ſtands in expectation of the worſt,
Encounters fortune with a naked breaſt.
I will do ſo no more. Now I go forth
Leſs credulous of what my ſoul deſires,
But not remiſs to ſeize on ſwift occaſion,
And urge it to the utmoſt. LUCIUS, ſtay
And tell CORNELIA — She has no ſupport,
No medicine, but hope — I'll to the gate.

[*Exit* ÆMILIUS.

Manet LUCIUS.

LUCIUS.

O beſt of men, I know where thou wilt go,
The firſt alarm provokes thee to the field,
One fate abides the children, and their ſire.
Tyrannic fortune! when thou raiſeſt up
To envy'd eminence the ſons of men,
Thou but prepar'ſt a triumph for thyſelf,
A ſecond triumph from their grievous fall.
Alike the column, and its ruins, mark
Thy ſovereign ſway. Now LUCIUS will obey
Thy orders, lord; then haſten to thy ſide;
The humble ſhrub ſhall with the cedar fall.

[CORNELIA *behind the Scene.*

CORNELIA.

Stand off.

LUCIUS.

CORNELIA's voice; it ſounds of woe.

[*Enter* CORNELIA, *followed by her woman.*

CORNELIA.

Stand off, I ſay, and let me find my huſband.

Fir

Fit mate for me, for me, whoſe eyes have ſeen
The murder of my child.

LUCIUS.

Alas! alas!
The blow at laſt hath fall'n.

CORNELIA.

His ſtreaming blood
I ſaw.

LUCIUS.

His blood! whom has the tyrant ſpar'd!

CORNELIA.

None, LUCIUS, none. I tarry'd not to ſee
A ſecond ſtroke. Oh lead me to my huſband.

LUCIUS.

He guards the gate.

[*Sound of trumpets.*

But hark his trumpets ſound,
And ſound a charge. Lady, my ſon went forth
To rouſe the Britiſh legions to defend
Their leader, and thy ſons. That ſound proclaims
Tumult and war are up. My lord is there.

[*Exit.*

Manent CORNELIA *and attendants.*

CORNELIA.

The frantic father ruſhes to revenge
His ſons, or throw the load of life away.
The deſolate CORNELIA ſhe remains,
Her children murder'd, and her huſband ſlain.

Enter PRIEST.

Where are thy omens, thy predictions too,
Thou prieſt of falſhood!

PRIEST.

Know 'twas VARUS fell,
And not thy ſon; his fall the ſignal prov'd

Of

Of inſtant battle. With a whirlwind's rage
His legions ruſh'd upon the tyrant's guard;
Thy valiant ſons are free, and lead the fight.

CORNELIA.

Can this be truth? Shall I again believe,
And wake me from the dreadful dream of death
That had poſſeſt my ſoul?

PRIEST.

Matron! thy ſons,
Thy huſband too, victorious ſhall return.
I ſaw the bird of JOVE his wings extend,
And hover o'er their battle; ſtill he bears
Upon his pinions conqueſt.

CORNELIA.

Say'ſt thou ſo!
Then heaven and thou forgive me. JOVE ſupreme!
If I have ought offended, on my head,
On mine alone, let all thy wrath deſcend:
But ſpare my ſons, and ſpare their blameleſs ſire.

Enter LUCIUS.

LUCIUS.

Lady, rejoice, the tyrant is no more;
His barbarous cohorts yield.

CORNELIA.

Bleſt be thy tongue.
But tell me of my ſons, and of their father?

LUCIUS.

With voice and hand they urge the fainting foe,
Whoſe courage with their furious leader died.
Long, like a mound againſt the raging main,
Stood MAXIMIN, the bulwark of his hoſt;
His ſtrength defied the fury of the ſtorm;
Till to the van reſiſtleſs TITUS came.
By TITUS' noble arm the giant fell,
And o'er him ruſh'd the war.

COR-

CORNELIA.

Not without crush
And havock round him, ſuch a ruin fell.
O miniſter of heaven! why doſt thou bend
Thine eye on empty ſpace, and gaze on air?
Can'ſt thou deſcry the future, or perceive
Events accompliſh'd, tho' unknown?

PRIEST.

'Tis done.
The weary ſiſters reſt. CYLLENIUS—comes,
Like a bright meteor ſtreaming down the vault
Of azure heaven; in his right hand the rod,
And in his left, a laurel dropping blood,
Behold!

Enter ÆMILIUS *attended.*

CORNELIA.

My huſband! oh! Where haſt thou left
Thy ſons?——

ÆMILIUS.

They come victorious from the field.

CORNELIA.

Why doſt thou faintly ſpeak ſuch welcome tidings?
Thou art not wounded?

ÆMILIUS.

No.

CORNELIA.

From whence that cloud
Which overcaſts thy brow? What damps thy joy?
Tell me, ÆMILIUS! for I read thy ſoul,
There indivulg'd ſome cruel evil lies.

ÆMILIUS.

Alas!

CORNELIA.

Thou ſigh'ſt not thus for VARUS loſt.

My ſons, thou ſay'ſt, draw near; what is the grief
That wrings thy heart?

ÆMILIUS.

O ſummon to thine aid
What conſtancy thou haſt; ſoon ſhalt thou ſee
What I would not relate.

CORNELIA.

Ha! am I mock'd
With falſe reports?
What ſpectacle is this!

[*Enter* TITUS *wounded, and ſupported by* PAULUS *and ſoldiers.*]

Are theſe the victors! oh my TITUS dies!

TITUS.

I ſtood the chance of war. Do not bewail
A fate ſo far above my higheſt hope
When laſt we parted. Men are born to die.

CORNELIA.

But not like thee, in youth untimely ſlain.

TITUS.

This active day has been an age of life.
Rome is deliver'd. Thou haſt ſtill a ſon.
Why mourns my brother o'er a ſoldier's fall?

PAULUS.

I griev'd not, TITUS! when our lot was equal.

CORNELIA.

There will be wars again to ſnatch thee too.
Fear not too long a life: the uſeleſs live,
The vile, the odious; thy deſert is death.

TITUS.

My limbs grow weak, upon the earth I'll reſt.
Have I redeem'd my raſhneſs? O my father!

ÆMILIUS.

Tis ſcarce a blemiſh to be brave to raſhneſs.

To

To thee Rome owes her ſafety, her exiſtence;
And with her chief deliverers ranks thy name.

TITUS.

I feel my father's praiſe, now when the hand
Of death comes near my heart.

CORNELIA.

I will be calm.
O let me not diſturb his parting ſoul.
Suſtain me, mighty gods!

TITUS.

To ſooth her grief,
My PAULUS, be thy care. My laſt requeſt,
My father, hear. O comfort that good man;
His ſon before me ruſhing, in his breaſt
Receiv'd a javelin, that was aim'd at mine.
Cheriſh his age. [*Dies.*]

AEMILIUS.

Thou Roman, to the height
Of Roman virtue! to lament for thee,
With common wailings, were a feeble part;
And far beneath the ſpirit of thy fall;
Unworthy of thy father.

PAULUS.

From this place
Let me perſuade my mother to retire.

CORNELIA.

I muſt behold the dead. Fear not exceſs,
Nor vehemence from me. Thoſe features wear
A look of triumph. Yes, thy mother's heart,
Amidſt her anguiſh, at that look revives.
The cruel fate thy generous mind embrac'd
Thou haſt eſcap'd, to meet the death thou lov'd'ſt
In arms, victorious o'er thy proſtrate foe.

Now to the place, where I will dwell with grief,
And ever liſten to my heroe's praiſe.

[*Exit* CORNELIA *with* PAULUS.

PRIEST.

He fell not till each omen was accompliſh'd,
Himſelf, his brother, and his country free.
No height, beyond the ſummit where he ſtood,
On earth remain'd: that he might ne'er deſcend,
The gods could only grant a death like his.

ÆMILIUS.

Hence to the forum bear the noble corpſe;
And let the muſick of the legions ſound
A warlike ſymphony, whoſe ſtrains expreſs
Our mingled ſtate of triumph, and of ſorrow.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

OUR Author, as I'm told, is not to ſeek
In antient Lore; in Latin, nor in Greek.
I therefore did adviſe him, as a friend,
To make his learning ſerve ſome uſeful end:
And let me know, what rules he had obſerv'd,
What unities of time and place preſerv'd.
He anſwer'd, Poetry is not an art;
'Tis nature only frames the poet's heart:
Still as he thinks, the ſcene he feels along,
And from his boſom burſts the raptur'd ſong.
This is the ſacred oracle, the ſhrine
The bard conſults, and here, the tuneful Nine.
With the ſame fire, the hearer's ſoul muſt glow,
Elſe vain to him, the tale of tragick woe.
There is a temper, which is all in all:
That ſounds reſponſive to the poet's call.
Like Memnon's harp, which pour'd harmonious lays,
Whene'er its ſtrings were touch'd by Phœbus' rays.
This temper of the ſoul is ſweet and wild;
It ſobs, or ſmiles, as ſudden as a child;
To woes imagin'd tears unfeign'd gives,
And in the poet's works of fancy lives.
Whilſt thus he ſpoke, a bell was heard to ring;
He ſtop'd, and ſtarted like a guilty thing;
Ere the dread curtain roſe, in haſte withdrew,
And at a diſtance waits his doom from you.

FINIS.